



Nearly half of new U.S. virus infections are in just 5 states

By RUSS BYNUM and
MICHELLE R. SMITH

Associated Press

Nearly half of new coronavirus infections nationwide are in just five states—a situation that is putting pressure on the federal government to consider changing how it distributes vaccines by sending more doses to hot spots.

New York, Michigan, Florida, Pennsylvania and New Jersey together reported 44% of the nation's new COVID-19 infections, or nearly 197,500 new cases, in the latest available seven-day period, according to state health agency data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. Total U.S. infections during the same week numbered more than 452,000.

Surging vaccines to places where the number is going up makes sense, said Dr. Elvin H. Geng, a professor in infectious diseases at Washington University. But it's also complicated.

"You wouldn't want to make those folks wait because they were doing better," Geng said. "On the other hand, it only makes sense to send vaccines to



In this March 29, 2021, file photo, people wearing face masks as a precaution against the coronavirus wait in line to receive COVID-19 vaccines at a site in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

where the cases are rising." So far, President Joe Biden's administration has shown no signs of shifting from its

policy of dividing vaccine doses among states based on population. The spike in cases has been

especially pronounced in Michigan, where the seven-day average of daily new infections reached

6,719 cases Sunday—more than double what it was two weeks earlier.

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In this March 26, 2021, file photo, people enjoy lunch hour in Union Square in New York.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

Though Michigan has seen the highest rate of new infections in the past two weeks, Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has said she does not plan to tighten restrictions. She has blamed the virus surge on pandemic fatigue, which has people moving about more, as well as more contagious variants.

Whitmer got her first vaccine shot Tuesday, the day after Michigan expanded eligibility to everyone 16 and older. She asked the White House last week dur-

ing a conference call with governors whether it has considered sending extra vaccine to states battling virus surges. She was told all options were on the table. In New Jersey, where the seven-day rolling average of daily new infections has risen over the past two weeks from 4,050 daily cases to 4,250, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy said he is constantly talking to the White House about demand for the coronavirus vaccine, though he stopped short of saying he was lobbying for more vac-

cines because of the state's high infection rate.

Vaccine shipments to New Jersey are up 12% in the last week, Murphy said Monday, though he questioned whether that's enough.

"We constantly look at, OK, we know we're going up, but are we going up at the rate we should be, particularly given the amount of cases we have?" Murphy said. Former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb has urged the Biden administration to push additional coronavirus shots into parts of

the U.S. experiencing outbreaks including Michigan, New York and New Jersey.

"I think what we need to do is try to continue to vaccinate, surge vaccine into those parts of the country," Gottlieb said in a March 28 appearance on CBS's "Face the Nation." "So the incremental vaccine that's coming onto the market, I think the Biden administration can allocate to parts of the country that look hot right now."

Researcher Joshua Schwab of the University of California at Berkeley recently estimated that doubling the current vaccine allocation in Michigan for two weeks could reduce hospitalization admissions by 10,000 and deaths by 1,200 by July. He concluded that far greater reductions could be achieved if extra vaccines were combined with some restrictions being put

back in place. Talk of sending extra shots to states struggling with outbreaks comes at a time when the number of daily infections in the U.S. has fallen dramatically compared to a January spike following the holiday season. However, the seven-day average of daily infections been rising slowly since mid-March. The five states seeing the most infections stand out. California and Texas, which have vastly larger populations than Michigan, are reporting less than half its number of daily infections. And as of Tuesday, 31 U.S. states were reporting seven-day averages of fewer than 1,000 new daily cases. White House coronavirus coordinator Jeff Zients said Tuesday more than 28 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines will be delivered to states this week. That allocation will bring the U.S. total to more than 90 million doses distributed in the past three weeks.

The news came as Biden announced more than 150 million coronavirus shots in arms have been administered since he took office, and that all adults will be eligible to receive a vaccine by April 19.

About 40% of U.S. adults have now received at least one COVID-19 shot, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Only 23% of American adults have been fully vaccinated — including more than half of Americans 65 and older.

Geng said the nation should take a step back and go slow. Even just a few more weeks of Americans sticking with social distancing and other precautions could make a huge difference.

"The take-home message here is, let's not jump the gun," Geng said. "There's light at the end of the tunnel. We all see it there. □

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Refugee families urge Biden to keep promise to up admissions

By JULIE WATSON
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The families of refugees and their supporters, including 124 elected officials, sent President Joe Biden a letter Tuesday urging him to make good on his promise to boost refugee admissions to the United States during the current budget year, replacing the record low number set by his predecessor.

Biden presented a plan to Congress two months ago to raise the ceiling on admissions to 62,500 and to eliminate restrictions imposed by former President Donald Trump that have disqualified a significant number of refugees, including those fleeing war.

But Biden has not issued a presidential determination since his administration notified Congress, as required by law. The action does not require congressional approval and past presidents have issued such presidential determinations that set the cap on refugee admissions shortly after the notification to Congress.

The Biden administration has given no explanation as to why the president has kept the refugee admissions cap of 15,000 set by Trump, the lowest it has been in the 41-year-old U.S. Refugee Resettlement program's history. The White



President Joe Biden visits a vaccination site at Virginia Theological Seminary, Tuesday, April 6, 2021, in Alexandria, Va.

Associated Press

House had no immediate response to the letter Tuesday.

"This continues to have a devastating impact on people in dire need of humanitarian protection," states the letter signed by the families of refugees, resettlement agencies and 124 state and local elected officials from 35 states.

Only about 2,050 refugees have been allowed in to the United States because of the restrictions set by

Trump, agencies said. Every day that passes without any action "leaves hundreds of refugee families in limbo in refugee camps and many waiting to be reunited with their loved ones here in the U.S. waiting for us to uphold our promise to protect," the letter states.

"We hope that President Biden will listen to our voices," said Nejra Sumic, one of the refugee organizers of the letter.

State Department spokes-

man Ned Price said the president is committed to "ensuring that the United States is, again, a leader when it comes to refugees," but it will take time to restore the program that was decimated by the previous administration. The drop in admissions under Trump forced many resettlement offices to close and let staff go.

"There's a great deal of rebuilding that needs to take place in order to have a

refugee program that allows us to achieve what we wanted to achieve in a way that is both effective and that is safe," Price said without elaborating.

The State Department, which coordinates flights with resettlement agencies, booked 715 refugees to come to the United States with the anticipation that Biden would have acted by March, but those flights were canceled since the refugees were not eligible under Trump's rules, according to resettlement agencies.

Most of the refugees are from Africa and fleeing armed conflict or political persecution. Most spots are allocated for people fleeing religious persecution, Iraqis who have assisted U.S. forces there, and people from Central America's Northern Triangle, the resettlement agencies say.

Among those who had their tickets canceled was a pregnant woman from Congo who can no longer fly because she is now in her third trimester, said Mark Hetfield, president of HIAS, a Maryland-based Jewish nonprofit that is one of nine agencies that resettles refugees in the U.S.

"There is simply no rationale for not making this change at this time," he said, adding that it is creating "so much extra stress for refugees." □

Italian Americans sue over Columbus holiday name change

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A Philadelphia City Council member and Italian American groups are suing the mayor's administration in federal court over the decision to change the name of city's Columbus Day holiday to Indigenous Peoples' Day.

The lawsuit filed Tuesday argues that while both groups deserve recognition, Mayor Jim Kenney "may not take action that discriminates against Italian Americans to exalt another ethnic group in its place," The Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

The plaintiffs, who include Councilman Mark Squilla, allege that Kenney's recent executive order renaming the October holiday fits a pattern of discrimination by the mayor against his Italian American constituents, who they say should be designated a protected class.

Also cited are efforts to remove a statue of Christopher Columbus from south Philadelphia and last year's removal of a statue of ex-may-

or and police commissioner Frank Rizzo from outside the municipal services building near City Hall after it became a target for protests. After the Rizzo statue was removed, defenders gathered at the Columbus statue in Marconi Plaza statue and protesters also arrived. The groups clashed for days before the city covered up the statue with a wooden structure and announced plans to seek its removal. Many Italian Americans have embraced the 15th century explorer — once hailed as the discoverer of America — as a cultural hero, but not all agree.

Cities across the U.S. have scrutinized Columbus' legacy in recent years, accelerated by protests against racial injustice that began last spring in the wake of the death of George Floyd.

In ordering the holiday's name changed, Kenney said in a proclamation that the story of Christopher Columbus was "deeply complicat-

ed," adding that the explorer "enslaved indigenous people, and punished individuals who failed to meet his expected service through violence and, in some cases, murder." Philadelphia is not the first city to strip Columbus' name from the October holiday to instead recognize Native Americans — Los Angeles, Denver and Austin, Texas, are among the municipalities to make the switch.

Back in Philadelphia, the plaintiffs also allege discrimination in the designation of prioritized neighborhoods for distribution of coronavirus vaccines, something the city has said targeted areas and groups with low vaccination rates.

On Tuesday, Kenney called the lawsuit "a patently meritless political ploy" and said it will "waste precious resources at a time when we are trying to both deal with devastating pandemic and work to build a safer and more equitable city for all residents." □

Doormen fired for failing to intervene in anti-Asian attack

By MICHAEL R. SISAK

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two New York City apartment building workers have been fired for failing to help an Asian American woman as she was being violently attacked on the sidewalk outside, the building's management company said Tuesday.

Surveillance video of the March 29 attack near Times Square showed that the doormen didn't step outside and approach the woman until more than a minute after the violence stopped and the assailant walked away.

The men watched from the lobby as 65-year-old Vilma Kari was repeatedly kicked and stomped, the video showed. One of them closed the building's door as Kari lay on the ground seconds after the attack ended.

The building's management company, The Brodsky Organization, initially suspended the doormen pending an investigation. That investigation was completed on Tuesday and the doormen were fired, the



This image taken from surveillance video provided by the New York City Police Department shows an apartment building employee, center, closing the building's front door after a man assaulted a 65-year-old Asian American woman, Monday afternoon, March 29, 2021, a few blocks from New York's Times Square.

company said.

"While the full lobby video shows that once the assailant had departed, the doormen emerged to assist the victim and flag down an NYPD vehicle, it is clear that required emergency and safety protocols were not followed," the company said in a statement.

The Brodsky Organization

also pledged to give all building services employees training on emergency response protocols, anti-bias awareness and bystander intervention.

The doormen's union, SEIU 32BJ, said the workers are challenging their terminations under a grievance process outlined in their collective bargaining agree-

ment. The process can take months, the union said.

"We believe we must root out systemic racism in all its forms," 32BJ SEIU President Kyle Bragg said in a statement. "We believe that all union workers, especially workers of color who are often the subject of unfair treatment on the job, have a right to a fair process as

Associated Press

outlined in their contract." The union previously said that the doormen waited until the attacker walked away to check on Kari and flag down a nearby patrol car because they thought he had a knife.

The surveillance video shows a police car pulling up about a minute after the doormen went outside. The workers and officers are seen with her on the sidewalk for several more minutes before the video cuts off.

Brandon Elliot, a 38-year-old parolee convicted of killing his mother nearly two decades ago, was charged with assault and attempted assault as hate crimes. He is scheduled to be arraigned on a felony indictment on April 21. His lawyers have urged the public to "reserve judgment until all the facts are presented in court." Kari, who emigrated from the Philippines several decades ago, was attacked outside a luxury apartment building while walking to church. She suffered serious injuries including a fractured pelvis and spent a day in the hospital. □

Officials: Petty officer shot 2 sailors, then killed on base



Members of the Frederick Police Department Special Response Team prepare to enter Fort Detrick at the Nallin Farm Gate in a convoy of vans and sedans, following a shooting in the Riverside Tech Park, near the Royal Farms on Monocacy Boulevard, Tuesday morning, April 6, 2021, in northeast Frederick, Md.

Associated Press

By MATTHEW BARAKAT

FREDERICK, Md. (AP) — A Navy medic shot and critically wounded two U.S. Navy sailors at a Maryland business park Tuesday, then fled to a nearby Army base where he was shot and killed, police and U.S. Navy

officials said.

Fantahun Girma Wolde-senbet, a petty officer third class assigned to Fort Detrick, began shooting with a rifle inside a Navy-related business at the Riverside Tech Park, causing people inside to flee, Frederick po-

lice and Fort Detrick officials said at a news conference. Frederick Police Chief Jason Lando said detectives are still trying to determine a possible motive.

Brigadier General Michael J. Talley said Wolde-senbet drove to the base after the initial shooting at the office park and sped past the gate before he could be searched. Talley said he made it about a half-mile into the installation before he was stopped at a parking lot. He then brandished his weapon at officers from the installation's police force who had pursued him.

Talley said investigators are looking at whether the shooter knew the victims, but refused to speculate, saying, "We don't want to compromise any aspect of the investigation."

Fort Detrick is home to the

military's flagship biological defense laboratory and several federal civilian bio-defense labs. About 10,000 military personnel and civilians work on the base, which encompasses about 1,300 acres (526 hectares) in the city of Frederick.

The base is a huge economic driver in the region, drawing scientists, military personnel and their families. Frederick Mayor Michael O'Connor noted that various defense contractors are located near Fort Detrick and that it wouldn't be unusual for a member of the military to be off base and working with a private firm that does business with the U.S. government.

"When these incidents happen in other places, you're always grateful that it's not your community," O'Connor added. "But you always know, perhaps in the back

of your mind, that that's just luck — that there isn't any reason why it couldn't happen here. And today it did." By early afternoon, the Nallin Farm gate at Fort Detrick through which the shooter entered remained closed and two officers were standing by.

Mark Nelson, a firefighter who lives in a row of town-homes across the street from the base, said he heard the base blast warning sirens Tuesday morning. "I heard, I don't know what they call it, but they were like air raid sirens, and I knew something was going on," Nelson said.

Lando called the shootings "very tragic."

"It's happening too frequently," he said. Every time we turn on the TV we're seeing something like this happening. And now it's happening in our backyards." □

World powers seek to bring U.S. back into Iran nuclear deal

By DAVID RISING and ALEX SCHULLER

VIENNA (AP) — Officials from five world powers began a new effort Tuesday to try to bring the United States back into the fountaining 2015 nuclear deal they signed with Iran, a delicate diplomatic dance that needs to balance the concerns and interests of both Washington and Tehran.

The meeting in Vienna of envoys from Russia, China, Germany, France, Britain and Iran came as the U.S. was due to start its own indirect talks with Iran. It would be one of the first signs of tangible progress in efforts to return both nations to the accord, which restricted Iran's nuclear program in return for relief from U.S. and international sanctions.

Following the closed meetings of the signatories to the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Russia's delegate, Mikhail Ulyanov, tweeted that the initial talks were "successful."

"The restoration of JCPOA will not happen immediately. It will take some time. How long? Nobody knows," he wrote. "The most impor-



Political deputy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Abbas Araghchi, right, arrives at the Grand Hotel Wien where closed-door nuclear talks with Iran take place in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, April 6, 2021.

tant thing after today's meeting of the Joint Commission is that practical work towards achieving this goal has started."

In 2018, then-President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. unilaterally out of the accord, opting for what he called a maximum-pressure campaign involving restored and additional American sanctions.

Since then, Iran has been steadily violating restrictions in the deal, like the

amount of enriched uranium that it can stockpile and the purity to which it can be enriched. Tehran's moves have been calculated to pressure the other nations in the deal to do more to offset crippling U.S. sanctions reimposed under Trump.

U.S. President Joe Biden, who was vice president under Barack Obama when the original deal was negotiated, has said he wants to bring the U.S. back into the

JCPOA but that Iran must reverse its violations.

Iran argues that the U.S. violated the deal first with its withdrawal, so Washington has to take the first step by lifting sanctions.

Following the meeting in Vienna, Iranian state television quoted Iran's negotiator, Abbas Araghchi, as reiterating that message during the opening round of talks.

"Lifting U.S. sanctions is the first and the most neces-

Associated Press

sary action for reviving the deal," Araghchi was quoted as saying. "Iran is fully ready to reverse its activities and return to complete implementation of the deal immediately after it is verified sanctions are lifted."

At the meeting, participants agreed to establish two expert-level groups, one on the lifting of sanctions and one on nuclear issues, which were "tasked to identify concrete measures to be taken by Washington and Tehran to restore full implementation of JCPOA," Ulyanov tweeted. They are to start work immediately, and report their conclusions to the main negotiators.

The ultimate goal of the deal is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, something it insists it doesn't want to do.

Iran now has enough enriched uranium to make a bomb, but nowhere near the amount it had before the nuclear deal was signed. In the latest announced violation, Behrouz Kamalvandi, a spokesman for Iran's civilian nuclear program, said officials had begun mechanical testing of an IR-9 prototype centrifuge. □

Dutch police make arrest in thefts of Van Gogh, Hals works

By MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Dutch police arrested a suspect Tuesday in the theft last year of two valuable paintings by Vincent van Gogh and Frans Hals from different museums, a spokeswoman said. The paintings, however, remain missing.

In a statement posted on Twitter, police spokeswoman Maren Wonder said a 58-year-old man was arrested at his home in the Dutch town of Baarn, 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of Amsterdam. His identity was not released, in line with Dutch privacy guidelines.

"Unfortunately, we haven't yet recovered the paint-

ings and the investigation is continuing," Wonder said. She called the arrest "a really important step in the investigation."

Van Gogh's "The Parson-

age Garden at Nuenen in Spring 1884" was snatched from the Singer Laren museum east of Amsterdam in the early hours of March 30, 2020. The museum was

closed at the time due to a coronavirus lockdown.

The 25-by-57-centimeter (10-by-22-inch) oil-on-paper painting shows a person standing in a garden surrounded by trees with a church tower in the background.

The Hals work, "Two Laughing Boys," was stolen some five months later from Museum Hofje van Mevrouw van Aerden in Leerdam, 60 kilometers (about 35 miles) south of Amsterdam. The Van Gogh painting was on loan from the Groninger Museum in the Netherlands when a burglar smashed through reinforced glass doors to get into the Singer Laren, which is less than 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the

town where the suspect was arrested.

Singer Laren spokeswoman Esther Driessen welcomed the arrest and said she hopes it leads detectives to the painting.

"The most important thing is that the painting returns as quickly as possible to the Groninger Museum, where it belongs," she said.

The Hofje van Mevrouw van Aerden had no comment on the arrest. Police said last year that the same Hals painting was stolen in 1988 together with a work by Jacob van Ruisdael. Both were recovered three years later.

In 2011, the two paintings were again stolen and recovered six months later. □



In this Monday March 30, 2020, file photo, the exterior of the Singer Museum is seen in Laren, Netherlands.

Associated Press

Israeli president picks Netanyahu to try to form government

By LAURIE KELLMAN and
ILAN BEN ZION
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's president handed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the difficult task on Tuesday of trying to form a government from the country's splintered parliament, giving the embattled leader a chance to prolong his lengthy term in office while he stands trial on corruption charges.

In his announcement, President Reuven Rivlin acknowledged that no party leader had the necessary support to form a majority coalition in the 120-seat Knesset. He also noted that many believe Netanyahu is unfit to serve as prime minister in light of his legal problems.

Nonetheless, Rivlin said that there was nothing in the law preventing Netanyahu from holding that office. After consulting with the 13 parties in the newly elected parliament, Rivlin said that Netanyahu had the best chance of any candidate of forming a new government.

"I have decided to entrust him with the task," Rivlin said from Jerusalem.

"This is not an easy decision on a moral and ethical basis," he added. "The state of Israel is not to be taken for granted. And I fear for my country."

With that, Rivlin nudged



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, front, attends the swearing-in ceremony for Israel's 24th government, at the Knesset, or parliament, in Jerusalem, Tuesday, April 6, 2021.

Associated Press

forward the twin dramas over the country's future and Netanyahu's fate, giving Israel's longest-serving premier a fresh chance to try to salvage his career. Netanyahu now has up to six weeks to try to cobble together a coalition. If he fails, Rivlin could give another party leader the opportunity to try to form a government — or the country could be plunged into an unprecedented fifth election in just over two years.

Netanyahu has the most support — 52 seats — in Israel's Knesset. But that

is still short of a 61 seats needed for a majority. He is likely to use his powers of persuasion to try to lure a number of opponents, including close former aides who have vowed never to serve under him again, with generous offers of powerful government ministries or legislative committees.

In a meeting with members of his Likud party, Netanyahu said he would do his utmost to "take Israel out of the cycle of recurring elections and to establish a strong government for all citizens of Israel. Not a paralyzed government, but a

government of action." He said among his priorities would be replenishing Israel's stockpile of coronavirus vaccines after one of the world's most successful inoculation campaigns, rehabilitating the economy after the pandemic and confronting arch-enemy Iran.

But forming a government to do that won't be easy. In order to secure a majority, Netanyahu would likely require the support of a small Arab Islamist party, and one of his partners, the Religious Zionists, have an openly racist platform

and say they will not serve in a government with Arab partners.

"The chances of Netanyahu to form a government, as it seems right now, are quite low," said Yohan Pleisner, president of the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank.

Netanyahu will also likely need the support of the Yamina, a right-wing party led by a former ally turned rival. Yamina's leader, Naftali Bennett, has had a strained relationship with Netanyahu in recent years. He also been cool to an alliance with Arab parties.

Bennett called for formation of a "stable, right-wing" government on Tuesday and promised to negotiate in "good faith." But he did not commit to backing Netanyahu, who has led the country for the past 12 years.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid, head of the centrist Yesh Atid party, acknowledged that the law left Rivlin "no choice," but in the same tweet denounced the development as "a shameful disgrace that tarnishes Israel."

Lapid has offered an alternative: a power-sharing arrangement with Bennett that would see the two men rotate into the prime minister's job. They are expected to hold intense negotiations in the coming weeks.

Japan extends its own North Korean sanctions another 2 years



This March 25, 2021, file photo provided by the North Korean government, shows what it says a test fire of newly developed new-type tactical guided projectile by the Academy of Defense Science, at an undisclosed place in North Korea.

Associated Press

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan extended its own sanctions against North Korea for another two years as Pyongyang continues to develop its nuclear weapons without any progress in resolving the abductions of Japanese nationals.

Japan bans all trade between the countries and prohibits North Korean-registered ships from entering its ports, except for humanitarian purposes. It also bans flights between the countries.

Japan also abides by U.N. sanctions against North

Korea's nuclear and missile programs. They include an arms trade ban, a freeze of North Korean assets, a ban on people exchanges and restrictions on education and training.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato announced Tuesday the Cabinet had decided to extend the sanctions, which were to expire on April 13.

North Korea test-fired two ballistic missiles on March 25 for the first time in about a year, which Japan has condemned as a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. Japan, the

United States and South Korea have called for full implementation of the U.N. sanctions and for ensuring international efforts to de-nuclearize North Korea.

In 2002, North Korea admitted to kidnapping 13 Japanese nationals in the 1970s and '80s to train spies in Japanese language and culture. Five of them were allowed to return to Japan later that year, and Pyongyang says the others had died or never entered the North.

Tokyo began limited sanctions against North Korea in 2006 and has since extended and expanded them. □

Tanzania's new president changes policy on COVID-19, media

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Tanzania's new president appears to be taking a new, scientific approach to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan said Tuesday she will form a technical committee to advise her about the scope of COVID-19 infections in the country and how to respond to the pandemic.

COVID-19 is "not something we should be quiet about or refuse flatly or accept without doing a scientific examination," Hassan said in Swahili.

"We will do medical research which will tell us the scope of the problem and advise us about what the world is recommending as well as our own expertise," she said.

Hassan, made the remarks that were broadcast live, after swearing in key government officers in a hall in State House, the president's official residence in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city. More than 100 top government officials were present, most of whom did not wear face



In this Tuesday, March 16, 2021, file photo, Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan speaks during a tour of the Tanga region of Tanzania.

Associated Press

masks or keep a distance from each other.

Hassan's comments are a dramatic switch from the policy of her predecessor, the late President John Magufuli, who was one of Africa's leading COVID-19 deniers. He claimed in June last year that Tanzania had rid itself of COVID-19 through three days of na-

tional prayer. He dismissed scientific approaches to prevent and treat the disease. He discouraged the use of face masks and instead promoted prayer, physical fitness and herbal remedies.

Magufuli's government fired officials who gave other opinions and some were arrested.

Hassan was in her second term as vice president when Magufuli dropped out of public view at the end of February. The populist president was not seen in public for 19 days, raising speculation that he was sick with COVID-19. Hassan announced Magufuli's death on March 17, saying it was due to heart failure.

She made history when she was sworn in as Tanzania's first woman president on March 19.

Tanzania's opposition leaders charge that Magufuli, 61, died of COVID-19, the disease he had downplayed. Magufuli warned Tanzanians against using the vaccines against the disease. He instead promoted trade and international tourism, eager to avoid the economic pain of neighboring countries that had imposed lockdowns and curfews and restricted international travel. He refused to ban public gatherings. In her address Tuesday to the country Hassan also ordered media houses that had been closed during her predecessor's rule to be reopened. She also urged regional officials to encourage freedom of expression to allow members of the public to express their grievances without being intimidated.

"I am hearing some media outlets, mobile televisions had been banned. I want those media allowed to operate but as per the laws of this country. □

Myanmar's online pop-up markets raise funds for protest

By JERRY HARMER
Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — With security forces in Myanmar having shot dead at least 570 protesters and bystanders in the past two months, many of the country's residents see ventur-

ing out onto the street as a brave but foolhardy act. Online, many have found a safer, more substantive way to show their defiance against February's military takeover — virtual rummage sales whose proceeds go to the pro-

test movement's shadow government and other related political causes. Everything from clothes and toys, to music lessons and outdoor adventures are on sale. Foreign friends are encouraged to donate, but fundraising inside Myanmar also serves the purpose of raising political consciousness for challenging the ousting of Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government.

Facebook users have taken to the social network to sell off their possessions, advertising that all the money raised will go to fund the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, formed by elected members of Parliament who were blocked from taking their seats by the coup. □



In this April 4, 2021, file photo, young demonstrators participate in an anti-coup mask strike in Yangon, Myanmar.
Associated Press

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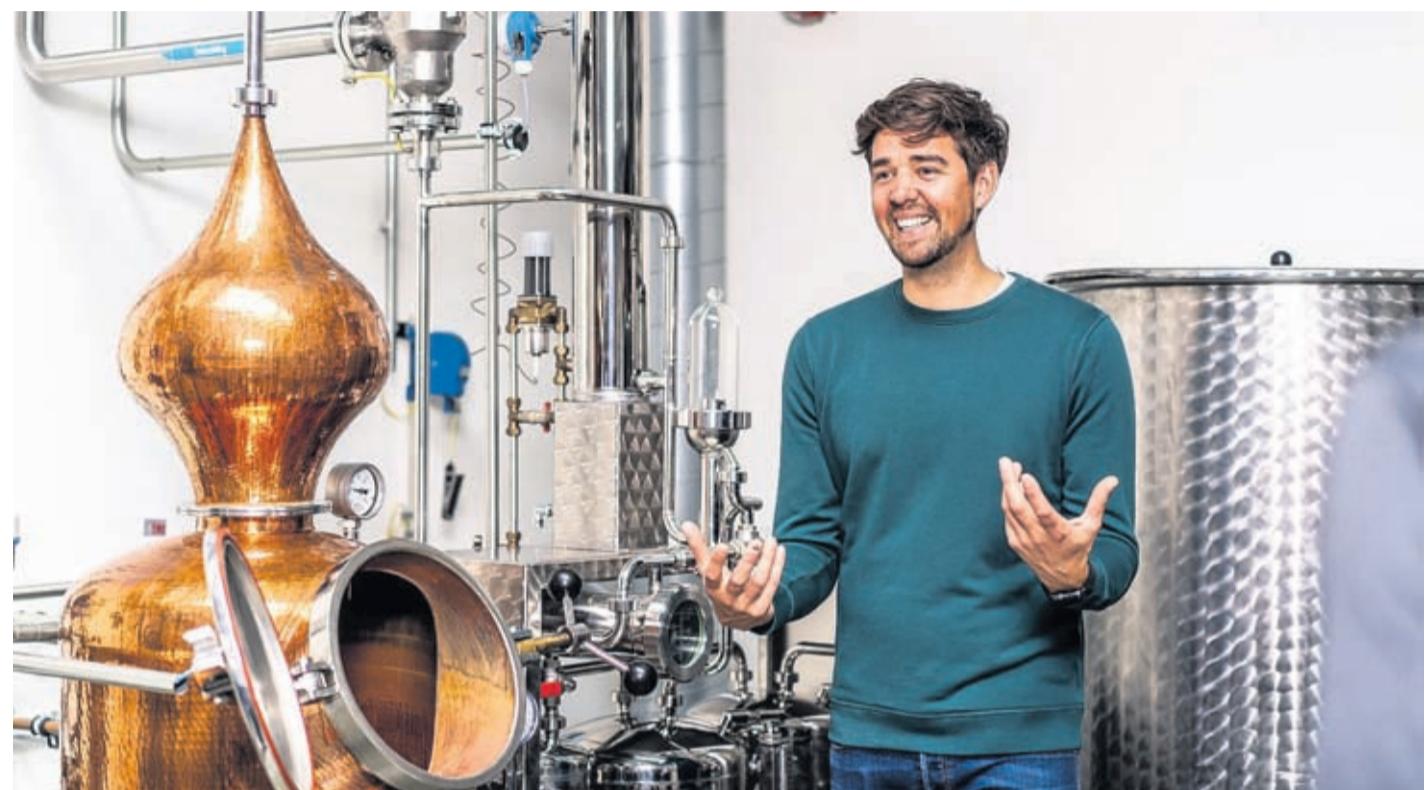
Ruben Maduro is conquering the rum world

Part 1

THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS - Ruben Maduro entered the first cocktail bar four years ago with a bottle of botanical rum under his arm, and the rest is history. Today we read part 1 of this amazing Aruba adventure, stay tuned for part 2 tomorrow

Santiago Tromp braved the Caribbean Sea at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Aruban was a sailor with a passion for rum. The glasses with the aromatic stuff that flew over the bar at that time, undoubtedly came from the barrels (Bocas) of Santiago Tromp's ship. So, it is not surprising that his great-grandson Ruben Maduro is currently conquering the rum world. Great-grandfather Tromp is an example for Ruben, born in Breda, who produces rum in his own distillery in Amsterdam-South. Botanical rum to be precise.

Spirited Union works with rum distilleries from countries such as Panama, Belize, Barbados, Jamaica and Swaziland and distills that rum with natural ingredients. Lemons from the Italian Amalfi Coast, for example. Or pineapple of the highly regarded Queen Victoria variety. But more importantly, what Spirited Union rum doesn't contain: get rid of those artificial colors and flavors. Spirited Union wants to conquer and reform the rum world in a natural way. It has been four years since Spirited Union was born, Ruben tells me. It was early March. There was no distillery and no money. 55 bottles of Union 55 (the



predecessor of the current brand name) Spice & Sea Salt, produced in a small Amsterdam distillery. But no labels.

The honeymoon period: "Bizarre how your resilience is not present"

March 9, 2017 was the launch of Union 55 - referring to the 55 days that the rum has matured - must be the start of a beautiful brand that is slowly spreading across the world. Then you need a nice bottle of rum and a nice label. "The packaging has to be really top notch," is what someone advised me. I found a top printing company in England through via. I had to tick off those labels immediately. So, I sold the first 55 bottles to friends and fam-

ily for \$100 each. I could pay for the labels with that money. It took until that shipment arrived and on launch day that we were notified that the labels were missing."

"In tears, I called my brother," It's not going to happen! "I said dramatically. He sent a van to the border, found the container together with the postal company and tracked down the pallet. An hour before the journalists and friends and family arrived, I had the labels in my hands. You will recognize the first 55 bottles immediately, because the labels are stuck on them at an angle. I was still completely shaking. Speaking of honeymoon: mine was characterized by ultimate highs and lows."

Not even long before that, Ruben quit his job at the Amsterdam distiller Bols. To review Ruben's life story in a nutshell: born in Breda, raised in Aruba, then moved to London to pursue a career in the bar world. "There I was able to taste the Michelin approach to the cocktails." Once back on the island, Ruben became frustrated with the vision of rum. "On the one hand, you had the slow tempo, sipping rum. Traditional. Do not mix, but drink pure. Old men playing dominoes in Cuba with a cigar in their mouth. Great, but also exclusive and difficult. On the other hand, there is the rum with the pirate on the label that you ram through the cola.

Continued on Page 9



MONDAY MADNESS AND BINGO ARE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED

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Ruben Maduro is conquering the rum world

Part 1

Continued from Page 8

With artificial colors and flavors. Everything that is not cool." What if I sit down among them, Ruben wondered, "that was the idea years ago."

In vain he applied for a loan for his own distillery from an Aruban bank, later a new period as a London cocktail shaker also disappointed him. The blood crawled where it couldn't go. Or in this case the rum. "During a distiller course in Scotland I found out that I knew nothing about production, supply chain, branding, fire safety and so on. He therefore learned the tricks of the trade at Bols. For that brand, Ruben traveled the world, discovered different drinking cultures. "And I saw that rum still had so much potential." In the meantime, Ruben had earned

his place at Bols and approached the master distiller. Whether he could use the boilers for his own project on his free Friday afternoons. "Within the company, the golden cage became increasingly locked and my enterprising brain often clashed with it," the native Bredanaar looks back. "Fuck it, I'm going to start for myself. The next two years I developed the brand and then I entered the Amsterdam cocktail bar Feijoa with a bottle under my arm. My very first rum was the Spice & Sea Salt. Focused on cocktail business, because from my experience I knew that salt enhances flavors and can create a balance between bitter and sweet. Without the bottle I walked out of the store: sold. I jumped in the air. In the beginning everything is extreme. If someone said "I like it" it was the best day of your life. But if you then heard that some-

one didn't like your rum, you immediately went into a depression. Bizarre how that resilience is absent. Those first months with the bottles under my arm were without a doubt the most special time."

The setback: "Your company is like an affair"

That one cocktail bar with Ruben's rum on the counter became two, then five and then ten. "We had gold in our hands. There is such a thing as the first mover advantage. We had to act quickly before others would develop this idea." And for Ruben, the best ideas arise in the shower. "Early in the morning I am at my sharpest. I thought about the conversation I had in London, came to the office and told my then colleague: dude, we are going to open our own distillery." □

Honoring of a distinguished visitor at Casa del Mar

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor one of Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as a Distinguished Visitor of Aruba. The symbolic Distinguished Visitor certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 10 years and more consecutively.

The honoree was Ms. Keatyn Braden who has been visiting Aruba with her parents since she was only 8 months old!

This lovely girl stated that she loves the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches, beautiful sunsets, and Aruba's warm and friendly people whom have become like family to her.

Richardson together with the representatives of the Casa Del Mar Beach Resort presented the certificate to the honoree, handed over some presents and also thanked her parents for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and bringing her to this beautiful island for so many years. □





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Papillon restaurant: The butterfly effect of magnificent food

PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film "Papillon" starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island's example where 'life imitates art.' The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

"We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget," says owner Tina. She points out that all Covid-protocol is in place here, they are very keen on hygiene and offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with social distancing in place and right on the high-rise strip.

Now: Early Bird & Live Music

New rules with regards to the Covid-19 situation will not prevent us from offering you a wonderful, gas-

tronomic night. Papillon knows how to fly high and rises to the occasion with a beautiful combo of three courses including a glass of wine for only \$ 32 per person. This Early Bird is on from 5pm to 7pm. It gets even better with live entertainment by the local star Marisela, praised for her amazing voice which she will bring to you on Mondays and Fridays. The talented tunes of Jairo's saxophone enchant you on Tuesdays and Thursdays and each Saturday Venezuelan born musician Jose Herrera will show you why his name is established on the island and in Europe.

Oysters, caviar and wild boar

You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want something special, a different flow than the usual then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis with KLM, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of this combined with an extensive wine list from around the world makes



Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.

Tina: "Our chef is from Peru and at the moment we have the renowned guest chef Griet Vanbrabant who worked in Michelin star restaurants like El Bulli in Spain which happened to be the world's best restaurant for many years and Pujol in Mexico. So this is the time to come over and reserve your table."

Vegetarian vibes present

Impressive vegetarian/vegan dishes are set up especially for the guests by the chef and Meredith from Vegan Aruba. "We offer vegan choices that are really good

and tasty. Our daily soup is always vegan too." What are you waiting for, make sure to pay a visit to this elegant yet laid-back restaurant while on Aruba. You are most welcome!

Papillon Restaurant is located at The Village across the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino and within walking distance of all other major hotels. □

Make your reservation today at:

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For all menus and specials visit the website: www.papillonaruba.com.

Honoring loyal visitors at Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort



EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Kimberly Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The Distinguished visitor certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 10 years and more consecutively.

The honorees were the lovely couple **Mr. Joel Dennis & Mrs. Gina Ramrach** from New Jersey, USA!

This lovely couple stated that they

love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches, its safety, the exceptional treatment at the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort, Aruba's warm and friendly people whom became like family to them.

Richardson together with the representatives of the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort presented the certificate to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

Millennial Money: Reboot your budget to prep for reopening

By COURTNEY JESPERSEN of
NerdWallet

Picture cruising your car deep into 2021 and never glancing in the rearview mirror. Vaccines, travel and a hope of normalcy are finally on the horizon.

With so much to look forward to in the future, it's understandable to not want to look back.

But returning to typical day-to-day life will be a transition. And from a financial standpoint, you'll want to assess your past budgeting behavior to prepare for more normal days ahead.

REVIEW PAST AND CURRENT SPENDING

Last year's spending didn't look like 2019. And 2021 won't look like either 2020 or 2019. But you'll need this historical insight to inform your future spending, especially as you start reintroducing expenses that used to be ordinary, like concert tickets, plane tickets and so forth.

Some people's spending decreased dramatically last year (either from necessity or choice). But others faced comparable expenses, says Molly Laughter, certified financial planner and founder of Laughter Financial LLC in Dallas.



In this Feb. 25, 2021, file photo, a pedestrian in a face covering walks past a sign plastered on the windows of a restaurant to announce that it is open after closure because of the coronavirus in Boulder, Colo.

Remember that jungle gym for the kids to play on in the backyard? Or the Xbox for long nights of playing video games? They may have been great ways to keep you occupied and comfortable at home, but now you'll need to find a way to balance these newer expenses with your past spending on the activities you hope to return to. Since many of us are already taking a close look at our finances right now as we file taxes, Laughter sug-

gests using this opportunity to review year-end financial summaries from your credit cards and bank accounts.

Size up each category. How much did you spend? Was it worth that amount? Would you want to continue spending that much?

PLAY FAVORITES

Ever since COVID-19 became part of our vocabulary, there's been talk that life would never return to normal. Laughter anticipates your future spend-

ing will be a "new normal." Sure, you may introduce dinners out — and possibly even a trip — to the mix, but expect to continue paying for quarantine life staples like deliveries and at-home activities.

According to Vid Ponnappalli, CFP and owner of Unique Financial Advisors based in Holmdel, New Jersey, "There is going to be a paradigm shift with respect to how budgeting in the future will be compared to how it was pre-COVID."

Associated Press

This new balance means you'll need to play favorites with your finances. After all, you can't keep up the amount you've been dropping on at-home entertainment and food deliveries while also upping the amount you spend on indoor dining and live shows. It just won't all fit in the budget. Select the expenses you benefit from most.

To make the necessary adjustments, Laughter suggests looking at the big picture. Don't get too caught up in specific line items. (For example, if you're spending 25% less on grocery orders, you don't have to redirect that exact amount to dinners out.) Instead, once your needs and savings are accounted for, set a dollar figure you can afford each month for discretionary expenses, then spend it on whatever you want. You may never add back in some things you used to spend money on. As Ponnappalli says, we've all figured out new ways to spend less money and still have fun. Dropping thousands of dollars on concert tickets may not feel worth it anymore when you compare it with watching a (much cheaper) livestream at home. □

Trade announcement: Topps will offer stock to the public

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN
AP Business Writer

In addition to its trading cards, fans will soon be able to trade company shares of Topps.

The company said Tuesday that it will become a publicly traded company this year by tying up with a blank-check company, or SPAC, a special purposes acquisition company.

Topps, for anyone who has not opened the shoebox of trading cards in the attic in a while, has greatly expanded from its Bazooka gum days and is pushing into digital sales, apps, crypto currency and even NFTs, or non-fungible tokens.

Its subject matter has ex-

panded to, among other things, comics, professional wrestling, Formula 1, and film (Godzilla NFTs now on sale!).

Topps Co. said Tuesday that it will merge with Mu-drick Capital Acquisition Corp., which will make a \$250 million investment. Topps was bought in 2007 by former Disney CEO Michael Eisner through his firm, The Tornante Co. Eisner will hold his position at Topps as chairman of the board.

"The strong emotional connection between the Topps brand and consumers of all ages is truly foundational, and, when combined with our growing portfolio of strategic licens-

ing partnerships, creates a profitable business model with meaningful competitive advantages," Eisner said in a prepared statement Tuesday.

Michael Brandstaedter, CEO of Topps, will lead the company.

Companies have chosen to go public through SPACs at a record breaking pace in the last year. A SPAC is usually a group of investors who band together and look for acquisition targets. They can speed companies through the process of becoming publicly traded because the capital to do so has already been established. The initial investment of those larger investors, usually a portion,



In this March 6, 2007 file photo, Topps baseball cards are seen in Boston.

Associated Press

are converted to publicly traded shares available to anyone.

The most recent high-profile SPAC involved WeWork, whose initial public offering imploded two years ago. Unlike many companies that have gone public through a SPAC in the past

year, however, Topps is an iconic brand and its sales are booming. The 80-year-old company had sales of \$567 million last year.

The deal is expected to close this year and Topps will be listed on Nasdaq under the ticker symbol, "TOPP." □

High court sides with Google in copyright fight with Oracle

By JESSICA GRESKO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Technology companies sighed with relief Monday after the Supreme Court sided with Google in a copyright dispute with Oracle. The high court said Google did nothing wrong in copying code to develop the Android operating system now used on most smartphones.

To create Android, which was released in 2007, Google wrote millions of lines of new computer code. It also used about 11,500 lines of code copyrighted as part of Oracle's Java platform. Oracle had sued seeking billions.

But the Supreme Court sided 6-2 with Google, describing the copying as "fair use." The outcome is what most tech companies -- both large and small -- had been rooting for. Both Microsoft and IBM were among the industry heavyweights that had filed briefs backing Google in the case. They and others warned that ruling against the Mountain View, California-based company could have profound consequences, stifling innovation and upending software development.

Oracle had won backing from the movie and recording industries as well as publishers, which favor expansive copyright protections to protect their profits from books, articles, mov-



In this Oct. 5, 2020, file photo the Supreme Court in Washington.

Associated Press

ies, TV shows and music. The Trump administration had also backed Oracle. In his opinion for the court's majority, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote that Google "took only what was needed" and that "Google's copying was transformative," a word the court has used "to describe a copying use that adds something new and important." Google had said its actions were long-settled, common practice in the industry, a practice that has been good for technical progress. It said there is no copyright protection for the purely functional, noncreative computer code it used, something

that couldn't be written another way. But Austin, Texas-based Oracle argued Google "committed an egregious act of plagiarism."

The case has been going on for a decade. Google won the first round when a judge rejected Oracle's copyright claim, but that ruling was overturned on appeal. A jury then sided with Google, but an appeals court again disagreed.

Breyer wrote that in reviewing the lower court's decision, the justices assumed "for argument's sake, that the material was copyrightable."

"But we hold that the copy-

ing here at issue nonetheless constituted a fair use. Hence, Google's copying did not violate the copyright law," he wrote.

At one point in the decision, Breyer used a recipe-finding robot as part of an analogy to explain how code works. At another point, he invoked a one-sentence short story to acknowledge that copying a small amount could still be significant. Breyer included both the story, originally in Spanish, and its translation: "When he awoke, the dinosaur was still there."

Justice Clarence Thomas wrote in a dissent joined by Justice Samuel Alito that he believed "Oracle's code

at issue here is copyrightable, and Google's use of that copyrighted code was anything but fair."

Only eight justices heard the case because it was argued in October, after the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg but before Justice Amy Coney Barrett joined the court.

In a statement, Google's chief legal officer, Kent Walker, called the ruling a "victory for consumers, interoperability, and computer science." "The decision gives legal certainty to the next generation of developers whose new products and services will benefit consumers," Walker wrote.

Oracle's chief legal officer, Dorian Daley, condemned the outcome. "The Google platform just got bigger and market power greater. The barriers to entry higher and the ability to compete lower.

They stole Java and spent a decade litigating as only a monopolist can," she wrote in a statement.

Oracle's dogged pursuit of a case had been widely derided by other technology companies as a gross misapplication of copyright law. They argued it threatened to make it more difficult for different computer programs to work together and could stifle innovation among startups that might not be able to pay royalties for a few strands of coding.

The founder of Privacy Lab at Yale Law School, Sean O'Brien, said both amateur and professional software developers will now "sleep a little easier without worrying that innovation and collaboration would be handcuffed by new restrictions."

The Computer & Communications Industry Association, a major trade group, was among the technology voices celebrating the Supreme Court's decision. The court decision will also be welcome news to independent software developers, small startups and others who are tinkering with code, said Tiffany Li, a visiting law professor at Boston University. □

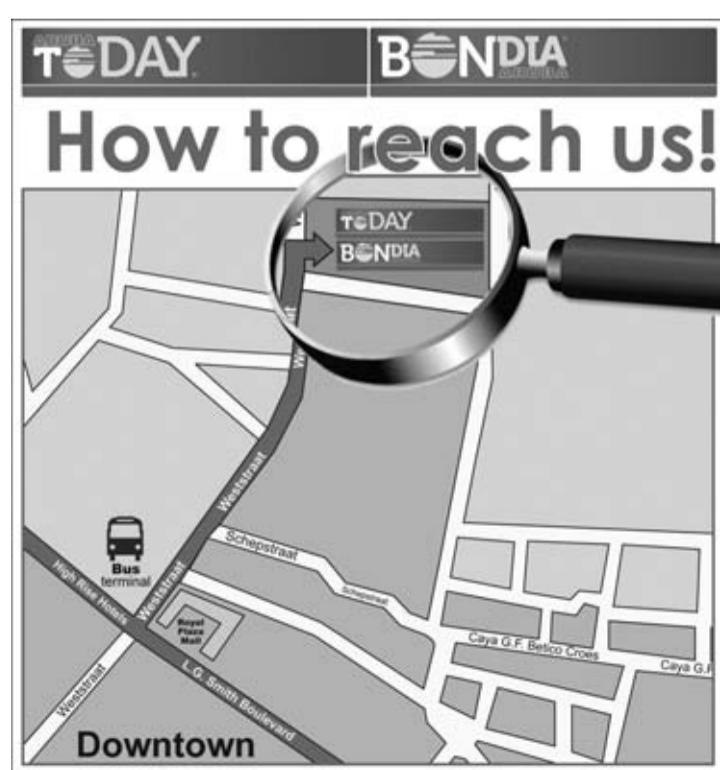
Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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A new 'Kung Fu' debuts at a crucial time for Asian Americans

NEW YORK (AP) — Up-and-coming actors will sometimes claim to know a variety of skills to be considered for roles, but Olivia Liang set a boundary early in her career.

"When I started off in the industry, people would ask me why martial arts wasn't on my resume because it was such a typecast for Asians to do martial arts roles," said Liang. "So I made a promise to myself. I was like, 'I'll never learn martial arts until someone pays me to learn martial arts.'"

Liang kept that promise. She learned martial arts as the lead of The CW's new series, "Kung Fu" — and she's getting paid for it.

"Kung Fu" is inspired by the 1972 series starring David Carradine. It stars Liang as Nicky Shen, who while visiting China, joins a monastery where she is taught Shaolin values and martial arts. When her mentor is killed, she returns home to find her community disrupted by a local gang. She must use the martial arts skills she learned to protect her neighborhood and family, and soon discovers she's being targeted by the same assassin who killed



This image released by The CW shows Olivia Liang as Nicky Shen in a scene from "Kung Fu," premiering on April 7.

Associated Press

her Shaolin mentor. Liang says what makes "Kung Fu" different than the superhero shows The CW is known for is that Nicky is not a vigilante.

"Nicky is heroic, but she doesn't see herself as a hero. She doesn't have a hero complex where she is going out to find bad guys. She sees bad things happening and feels like

she needs to do something about it."

The series has a mostly Asian American cast with an Asian American showrunner and executive producer, Christina M. Kim. "I'm so excited that I get to give some people this opportunity to shine," said Kim.

"When I was on set for the first time, we did a camera test and I literally was star-

ing at the monitor and it just hit me. I was like, 'I've never seen the screen filled with Asian American faces like this is.'"

Kim says her writers room is also diverse. She has five writers of Asian descent on staff. Half of the writers are also women, which Kim says is a novelty. "Usually it's just me and one other woman in a room."

"Kung Fu" premieres Wednesday on The CW and the pilot will be re-broadcast on TNT on Sunday.

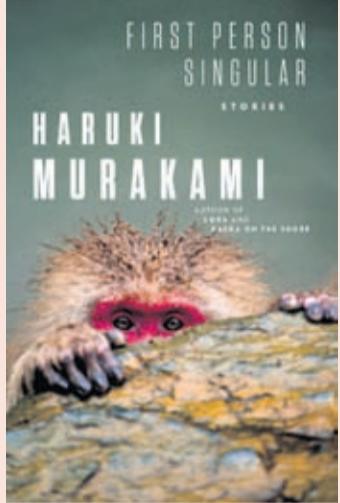
Tzi Ma, who plays Nicky's father, Jin, says it's remarkable to have so many people with Asian backgrounds working on the show, because he doesn't have to explain the Asian experience to people who are making creative assumptions to what that's like.

"Not only is there representation on screen but we back it up from our writers room to all our guest directors. It is an amazing sight to behold. I've been doing this for a minute now and I have never seen this kind of make up," said Ma.

Ma hopes the authenticity of the series will help to change the public consciousness at a time when hate crimes against Asian Americans are on the rise.

"The camera is a very interesting instrument. I want the audience to have the opportunity finally to see what real reputation representation is like. And when they get educated... they will begin to develop their taste of what's good, what's real and what's true." □

Review: A new collection of stories by Haruki Murakami



This cover image released by Knopf shows "First Person Singular" by Haruki Murakami.

Associated Press

By ANN LEVIN
The Associated Press

"First Person Singular," by Haruki Murakami (Alfred A. Knopf)
Haruki Murakami has a

new collection of stories told in the first person by an unnamed older man obsessed with baseball, music, and the porous borders between memory, reality and dreams.

He may describe himself as a "bland, run-of-the-mill guy," as in the story "Cream" — about a young man's encounter with an aging mystic — but Murakami Man is more like a walking encyclopedia who has a problem with women — mainly, that he can't seem to get past their physical appearance.

Thus, in "On a Stone Pillow," we have his memories of a melancholy poet and her "shapely round breasts"; in "With the Beatles," a first girlfriend with "small yet full lips" and a wire bra. (Both, by the way, are suicidal.)

In "Carnaval," the one story where a woman has agency, we are told over and over how ugly she is. The best story in the collection, translated from the Japanese by Philip Gabriel, is "Charlie Parker Plays Bossa Nova." It is built around the counterfactual premise that the legendary inventor of bebop jazz didn't die in 1955 at age 34 but lived into the 1960s, long enough to collaborate on a bossa nova album — a musical pairing as unlikely as that of the Carpenters and Cardi B.

At the end of the story, when Bird appears in a dream and performs "Corcovado" on his alto sax, the narrator is transported. It was music, he reflected, "that made you feel like something in the

very structure of your body had been reconfigured, ever so slightly."

In "Confessions of a Shinagawa Monkey," an unnamed narrator with the same flat affect as all the others befriends the titular monkey at a rural inn. After a long night of drinking beer and eating snacks — another favorite pastime of these loner men — the monkey tells him about the ruse he has used to satisfy his longing for female humans in a species-appropriate way.

At first, you are carried along in the slipstream of bizarre but plausible detail — a feat Murakami achieves through the use of banal, if not clichéd, language: "Honestly, it felt odd to be seated next to a monkey, sharing a beer,

but I guess you get used to it."

But if you're not a fan of Murakami's dreamy vibe and magical realism, if you think that life is confounding and interesting enough without needing to add fairy dust, then this probably isn't the book for you. You might ask yourself, why a Shinagawa monkey and not a tiger or leopard? In Murakami World, the answer would seem to be, why not? □

7	1	8	2	6	5	4	3	9
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5	6	7	1	3	8	9	2	4
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Difficulty Level ★★★

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AP source: MLB moving All-Star Game to Denver's Coors Field

By PAT GRAHAM

AP Sports Writer

DENVER (AP) — Major League Baseball plans to relocate the All-Star Game to Coors Field in Denver after pulling this year's Midsummer Classic from Atlanta over objections to sweeping changes to Georgia's voting laws, according to a person familiar with the decision.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Monday night because MLB hadn't announced the move yet. The commissioner's office was expected to declare Tuesday that the Colorado Rockies will host the game. ESPN was first to report the decision.

MLB pulled the July 13 game from Truist Park in Atlanta in response to Georgia voting rules that Republican Gov. Brian Kemp quickly signed into law March 25. Critics, including the CEOs of Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines and Coca-Cola, have condemned the changes as being too restrictive.

The Georgia law includes new limits on voting by



Los Angeles Dodgers fans Oliver Olson, left, of San Diego, Juan Campo and Rudy Soto, both of Los Angeles, hold up flags outside the main entrance to Coors Field as fans return for the first inning of a baseball game between the Dodgers and Colorado Rockies Thursday, April 1, 2021, in Denver.

Associated Press

mail and greater legislative control over how elections are run, amid a push in Republican-led states to reduce voting options after former president Donald Trump made baseless claims of widespread fraud in last year's election.

Colorado has a Democratic governor in Jared Polis and a Democratic-controlled legislature.

MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred made the decision to move the All-Star events and the amateur draft from Atlanta after

discussions with individual players and the Players Alliance, an organization of Black players formed after the death of George Floyd last year, the commissioner said in a statement.

Kemp has vowed to defend the measure, and

other Republicans have criticized MLB's move. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott backed out of throwing the first pitch at the Texas Rangers' home opener Monday and said the state would not seek to host the All-Star Game or any other special MLB events.

Coors Field last hosted the All-Star Game in 1998, the fourth season for the stadium and sixth for the Rockies franchise.

It's uncertain what kind of seating capacity there might be due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Rockies had a seating capacity during their first homestand against the World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers of 21,363 fans, which was 42.6% of usual capacity. The seating was in pods, and standing room areas weren't available for fans to gather.

Players also weren't allowed to sign autographs or toss baseballs into the stands, in accordance with MLB coronavirus protocols. Nolan Arenado might be back with the "home" team — the NL, not the Rockies. □

Athletic Equality Index highlights Division I LGBTQ policies

By ANNE M. PETERSON

AP Sports Writer

A review of Division I schools by a national advocacy organization has found that 92% do not have fully inclusive policies for trans athletes.

Details of the Athletic Equality Index review were announced Monday by Athlete Ally, a nonprofit that advocates for LGBTQ athletes.

The NCAA has had a transgender inclusion policy in place since 2011, but the AEI indicates such policies are lacking at the school level.

The AEI also shows that 70% of Division I schools don't offer LGBTQ support resources targeted for student-athletes, and 80% of schools did not have a fan code of conduct that addressed harassment of athletes or spectators at school sporting events.

Anna Baeth, director of re-

search for Athlete Ally, said that in addition to affirming LGBTQ-inclusive policies, the AEI can serve as a tool for young athletes looking at prospective colleges. Often, such policies are not readily available.

"We want it to be as transparent as possible because we wouldn't want an athlete to show up in a department — they get heavily recruited and then they show up and they're like, 'Actually, you know what? I'm not welcome here.' Or, 'Maybe I'm not protected here,' or 'Maybe legally I'm not protected in this state.' So those are the other layers of this that we're trying to think through: what does this mean for young athletes?" Baeth said.

Conservative lawmakers in more than 20 states have introduced legislation to ban or limit transgender athletes from competing on teams or sports that align

with their gender identity. Laws banning transgender women and girls from participating in organized sports have been signed in Idaho, Mississippi, Tennessee and Arkansas.

Proponents of the legislation say the rules are needed to prevent biological males from dominating women's sports. However, NCAA rules require transgender women to take hormone-suppressing drugs for a year before competing. President Joe Biden signed an executive order on the day he took office on Jan. 20 that bans discrimination based on gender identity in school sports and elsewhere.

In a letter to the Human Rights Campaign last week, NCAA President Mark Emmert affirmed the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

"It is our clear expectation that all NCAA student-



In this March 15, 2021, file photo demonstrators gather on the steps of the Montana State Capitol protesting anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in Helena, Mont.

Associated Press

athletes will be welcomed, treated with respect, and have nondiscriminatory participation wherever they compete," Emmert wrote. "We are committed to upholding these principles and will continue to assess emerging laws to ensure student-athletes have fair opportunities."

Emmert also asserted that NCAA champion host sites

must "demonstrate how they will provide an environment that is safe, healthy, and free of discrimination." The AEI gives 10 schools a perfect score for LGBTQ equity policies: Arizona, Ohio State, Boston University, Kent State, Miami, Southern California, George Mason, UC Davis, Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Pennsylvania. □

See ya Sam: Jets trade Darnold to Panthers for 3 draft picks

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr.

AP Pro Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Sam Darnold was the face of a hopeful franchise, a promising playmaker who might just be the New York Jets' quarterback for at least the next decade.

It took only three years for that dream to fizzle and fade into disappointment. Darnold was traded Monday to the Carolina Panthers, ending months of speculation and a stint in New York that was marked by a few flashes of brilliance, inconsistent play and unfortunate injuries.

And with the rebooting Jets holding the No. 2 overall pick in the NFL draft, they're likely moving on to another young signal-caller — perhaps BYU's Zach Wilson or Ohio State's Justin Fields — who they hope will deliver the team back to respectability.

New York acquired a sixth-round pick in this year's draft and second- and fourth-round picks in the 2022 draft. That gives them 21 selections over the next two drafts, with seven of them coming in the first two rounds.

Meanwhile, the 23-year-old Darnold gets a much-needed change of scenery and a new opportunity in Carolina, where he'll also be reunited with wide receiver Robby Anderson. The quarterback could also quickly seek some measure of revenge this season when the Panthers host the Jets.

"I like his toughness," Panthers general manager Scott Fitterer said. "He can move in the pocket and make plays down the field with his arm. All of those really stood out about him. I think in this offense with Matt Rhule and Joe Brady, that he can really take that next step."



In this Dec. 27, 2020 file photo, New York Jets quarterback Sam Darnold (14) walks on the field during the first half of an NFL football game against the Cleveland Browns in East Rutherford, N.J.

Associated Press

Darnold was considered an untouchable player on the Jets' roster in his second season, but it became clear they could move on when GM Joe Douglas backed off that stance in March. Douglas praised Darnold, but acknowledged he would answer calls from teams interested in acquiring him.

The market for Darnold didn't appear as robust as the Jets had hoped. But the speculation New York would move on from the young QB only intensified when Douglas, new coach Robert Saleh and offensive coordinator Mike LaFleur all traveled to Provo, Utah, to watch quarterback Wilson's impressive passing display at BYU's pro day on March 26.

With Darnold's future uncertain, New York had also long been among the teams mentioned as possible suitors for Deshaun Watson, who requested a trade from Houston. But he's currently dealing with legal issues as he is accused of

sexual assault and harassment in lawsuits filed by 21 women.

"I want to publicly acknowledge the commitment, dedication, and professionalism Sam displayed while with the Jets. He is a tough-minded, talented football player whose NFL story has not been written yet," Douglas said in a statement. "While all these things are true, this move is in the short- and long-term

best interests for both this team and him.

"We thank Sam for all of his work on behalf of this organization and wish him well as he continues his career." Then-GM Mike Maccagnan traded up to select Darnold with the No. 3 overall pick in 2018 out of USC. Darnold's California cool personality played well in New York and he seemed unfazed by the lofty expectations and the Big Apple spotlight.

But a foot injury as a rookie, a bout with mononucleosis in his second year and a shoulder injury last season

sidelined him for stints. And when he did play, Darnold's mistakes overshadowed the positives. That led to serious doubts as to whether he could ever truly lift the franchise. Former coach Adam Gase also acknowledged he didn't help Darnold enough to thrive in their two seasons together, and the Jets lacked playmaking talent to help him take the next step in his development.

Another likely determining factor was his contract. Darnold was entering the fourth year of his rookie deal and was scheduled to count \$9.8 million against the Jets' salary cap. Instead, they will get \$4.8 million in relief and a \$5 million "dead" charge for 2021. New York would have had until May 3 to decide whether to exercise Darnold's fifth-year option — which would have cost the Jets \$18.9 million, fully guaranteed.

And that was a price — and a risk — that proved too high.

A person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press the Panthers will discuss picking up the fifth-year option for Darnold with his agent. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the team hadn't announced its plans.

Douglas is in his third season as the Jets' GM, but is overseeing just his second full offseason. With a new coaching staff in place and soon a new quarterback, the entire franchise can fully reset as New York tries to end a 10-season playoff drought — the longest active streak in the NFL.

In 38 games with the Jets — all starts — he threw for 45 touchdowns and 39 interceptions. Darnold is also coming off his worst statistical season with just nine touchdowns and 11 interceptions. He's the first quarterback taken in the top five picks to not make it to a fourth season with the team that drafted him since JaMarcus Russell, who went No. 1 overall to the Raiders in 2007.

For Carolina, the trade further clouds the future of Teddy Bridgewater, who was 4-11 last season as a starter and struggled to win close games down the stretch. Bridgewater completed 69.1% of his passes, throwing for 15 touchdown passes and 11 interceptions. The team's primary backups last season were P.J. Walker and Will Grier.

After the season, Rhule said of Bridgewater: "He's our quarterback."

But the Panthers attempted to trade for Detroit's Matthew Stafford, who wound up with the Los Angeles Rams, and also were interested in Watson. Bridgewater has two years remaining on a three-year, \$63 million contract that he signed in 2020.

"There are things that we have to work through, obviously," Fitterer said. "We're going to talk to Teddy's agent and find the right place, whether it is here or wherever it may be. We will figure things out, contract-side as well."

The Panthers have the eighth overall pick in the draft and it was widely suspected they could use the selection on a quarterback. But with Darnold in the fold, the Panthers are likely to target other areas of need including offensive tackle, linebacker, tight end or cornerback. □

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